

The Kentucky State Arsenal: Peeling Away the Past



The appearance of the arsenal has changed many times. This postcard shows the building painted in one of its many color schemes. The building was sandblasted in the 1970s, exposing its brick façade.

Kentucky State Arsenal, postcard, ca. 1905
Courtesy of Capital City Museum

Historians and curators at the Kentucky Historical Society are uncovering the hidden past of the State Arsenal through various methods. Research in official records, manuscripts, and newspapers is yielding new historical insights. Analyses of the physical structure have revealed the building's transformation. These discoveries are guiding historic preservation and other decisions that will shape the appearance and use of the arsenal for years to come.



Through painstaking analysis, curators discovered seventeen layers of paint on the doors. The oldest layer was dark brown and red.

North doors of State Arsenal, 2009
Kentucky Historical Society Collections

During renovations existing drop ceilings were removed. Architects found the original floor joists and other details that tell how the building was used.

Arsenal first floor renovation, 2009
Kentucky Historical Society Collections



KentuckyMilitaryHistoryMuseum

AT THE OLD STATE ARSENAL

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